

GRAFIA, A NEW GENUS OF ORCHIDS

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The genus Phalaenopsis of Blume has long been a popular one with orchid collectors, and has in the past received considerable published attention from students, serious and casual, of the family. But it is only in recent years that we have seriously considered the components of this group, which dates from the year 1825.

As is well known, in the early days of botany, a truly diverse array of orchids was named, by different authors, as Phalaenopsis— a condition which also prevailed in Cymbidium, Dendrobium, Epidendrum, etc. Now, segregates from Phalaenopsis Bl. have been established (or re-evaluated) and accepted, these Doritis Ldl., Kingiella Rolfe, and Paraphalaenopsis A. D. Hawkes.

Considerable additional critical study of the orchids we still consider as Phalaenopsis remains to be done. The genus, as it is presently delimited, is still a motley assemblage of plants, several of which should be segregated as distinct taxa.

Reichenbach's plant named Phalaenopsis Parishii in 1865 is one of these, one which now requires our serious consideration. This had been collected in Moulmein, Burma, by the Rev. C. S. Parish, and introduced into England by Messrs. Low and Co. the previous year. It has, for more than a century, been in cultivation, yet though its aberrancy in its genus has been commented upon in the literature, no orchidologist has resolved the problem.

I am convinced that this orchid constitutes a genus of a single somewhat variable and rather widespread species, amply distinct from Phalaenopsis of Blume. I therefore propose the following new genus to accommodate it.

GRAFIA A. D. Hawkes, gen. nov.

Differt ab Phalaenopsis Blume in labellum libere mobilum, crista semi-lunata valde fimbriataque, antice appendix angusta, 4-divisa angustissima ornata.

A genus of a single species, ranging from the Himalayas to Burma. It differs from Phalaenopsis Bl. in its freely mobile labellum, which bears a semi-lunate crest, this strongly fimbriate; this is followed, anteriorly down the segment, by a forward-thrust, narrow appendage, this divided almost to its base into a quartet of slender filaments.

I would temporarily place the new genus in somewhat closer proximity to Ornithochilus Wall. than to Phalaenopsis Bl. itself, but believe that additional study of the entire alliance may alter this opinion. Since Grafia is present in choice contemporary collections, further fresh materials of the flowers will be welcome from my correspondents for study.

I wish to propose the new genus to honor Alfred Byrd Graf, editor of the remarkable and internationally valued volumes entitled Exotica. As seems customary with such serious workers, Mr. Graf's efforts have been largely unacknowledged, and I am sure that all of us who value his labors will consider the epithet of the new genus singularly appropriate.

GRAFIA PARISHII (Rchb. f.) A. D. Hawkes, comb. nov.

Phalaenopsis Parishii Rchb. f. in Bot. Zeit. 146. 1865. Phalaenopsis Parishii Rchb. f. var. Lobbii Rchb. f. in Saund., Refug. Bot. 1: pl. 85.

Distribution: Sikkim, Bhutan, and Assam to Moulmein and Tenasserim districts in Burma.

This unique plant is frequently deciduous in the wild, rarely so under cultivation. The Himalayan phase, described as a distinct variety by Reichenbach, does not differ save in coloration, hence is here considered a synonym of the typical species.

Grafia Parishii is taken up in greater detail in The Orchid Weekly, Vol. 5, 1966, to which the interested reader is referred. It is described as Phalaenopsis Parishii Rchb. f. in my Encyclopaedia of Cultivated Orchids 368. 1965, and is illustrated as Phalaenopsis Parishii Lobbii in Graf's Exotica 3: 1305. 1963.

This is a very attractive, profusely-flowered orchid when well grown, and in future our avid breeders are certain to take it under serious consideration as a parent; we already have casual indication (see Orch. Weekly 4: 462. 1964) that some efforts have been made in this respect.

NOTES ON NEW AND NOTEWORTHY PLANTS. XLV

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CLERODENDRUM GLABRUM var. VAGUM (Hiern) Moldenke, Prelim. Alph.

List Invalid Names 40, hyponym. 1940; comb. nov.

Siphonanthus glabra var. vaga Hiern, Cat. Afr. Pl. Welw. 1: 842. 1900.